

LEAPING OF A HEMIRAMPHID.

The synentognathous fishes comprise various elongated marine forms, and the remarkable flying fishes which make long excursions through the air supported by their greatly enlarged pectoral fins. It is interesting that the habit of leaping in the air is common throughout the group and therefore, may reasonably be supposed to have been possessed by the ancestors of the flying fishes before the fin development which has made it pre-eminent among these.* Or in other words, habit has preceded correlated structure in this case. The half-beaks are the modern synentognathi which apparently approach most closely to the ancestors of the flying fish.

On April 1, off Sandy Key near Cape Sable, Florida, there was an unusually favorable opportunity for the writer to watch the leap of a half-beak and a short quotation from his field notes of that date seems worth recording: "A Half-beak (probably *Hemiramphus*) of perhaps 9 in., skipped over the surface down wind with great speed. Initially it may have been more or less on its side, but towards the end of the leap (which probably exceeded 30 yards) it was right side up, its little anterior pectorals extended at right angles, and it appeared to maintain its impetus by skulling with the tail at intervals as it touched the surface." A surprisingly flying-fish-like performance.

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* See COPEIA, 1915, No. 19, p. 12-13.